

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

February 25, 2010

Present:

Linda Noble Claudette Lussier Carl Brunetti Joe Renning Hagop Jawharjian

Sheila Chisholm Jay O'Grady Bob Ericson

Absent:

Cheryl Ethier Greg Leonard John Picozzi

Call To Order

The meeting began at 7:35 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Work Session

The Budget Board would like more information on School Tuitions, such as what schools Lincoln students are being placed at, how many are each of those schools, and the cost of tuition there.

The Budget Board also wondered, in some cases, whether it was cheaper to create an environment where the students could stay in the Lincoln school system, or whether it was better to keep some in placements to not have to pay for additional costs, such as nurses, assistants, etc. in some cases.

Minutes

The minutes of February 11th and February 18th were distributed for review.

Carl Brunetti made a motion, seconded by Bob Ericson, to approve the minutes of February 11th.

The minutes of February 11th were approved by unanimous vote.

Jay O'Grady made a motion, seconded by Claudette Lussier, to approve the minutes of February 18th.

The minutes of February 18th were approved by a vote of 6-0 with Sheila Chisholm and Bob Ericson abstaining because they were not present at the meeting on February 18th.

Carl Brunetti made a motion, seconded by Claudette Lussier, to move Correspondence and Public Comment to the end of the meeting.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Old Business

Sub-Committee Reports

The Budget Board discussed the areas of the school budget that they had all looked at separately.

Personnel: Carl Brunetti

Carl noted that the schools have been very cooperative in giving

information he requests very quickly.

So far, he has only analyzed the information for errors, and to make sure the numbers all tie in correctly.

He has the information broken down by name, position, and category, and also the 5-year summary which was part of the budget when it was provided electronically.

Linda Noble asked if there are any retirements this year, and it was noted that there is Breakage of \$200,000 included in the budget, which the Board will ask about to find out more specifically what it is for.

Purchased Services: Jay O'Grady

Jay noted that he would ask for and would like to see a schedule of repairs and a copy of the contracts on equipment repairs.

Charter Schools are budgeted at a 400% increase, from \$100,000 to \$536,000.

Linda Noble wanted to know if they had budgeted to fill every available seat at the Charter Schools

Carl Brunetti noted that if Charter School enrollment increases, the enrollment numbers for the public schools should be decreased by the same amount.

Also questioned were Other Instructional Expenditures, and what items that budget line included.

Closing/Leasing of Fairlawn: Bob Ericson

Bob stressed that there needs to be coordination of the schools and

the Town in the turnover of this property, such as a complete manual of the building to assist the Town.

If it is leased, the income should go back into the school budget, but if it is not leased it is important that the building not be allowed to go into disrepair.

Carl Brunetti wondered if this budget item was listed in both the school and municipal budgets, and he wondered where the funds were for upkeep of the property if it is not leased.

If it is leased, the tenant would provide insurance.

The Budget Board wanted to know exactly how much the Town is saving by closing Fairlawn Early Learning Center, in the way of hard figures.

Special Education: Joe Renning

Joe noted that the biggest issue was Tuitions, and the Budget Board wanted to know what schools the students were being placed at, how many at each, and the cost of tuition there.

Also, the Budget Board wanted to know what was State mandated for Specialists, such as Psychologists and Social Workers.

Transportation: Sheila Chisholm

The Budget Board will need a copy of the Bus Contract along with the Special Education contracts, and wanted to know when they expire.

Jay O'Grady wanted to know if the Town paid for transportation to the charter schools.

The Budget Board also wanted to know figures of how many students

actually use transportation, particularly in High School, since the Town could possibly combine routes and run fewer buses.

They also wondered if the Town had an obligation to provide enough transportation for every student, or a percentage, etc

Non-Instructional: Hagop Jawharjian

Any salaries would tie into Personnel, which will be discussed.

Hagop noted that there was a large increase in Substitute Custodians, and it was questioned as to whether this was for after-hours activities.

Normally, the person/organization that is using the schools after hours are responsible for paying for custodial services, and the Budget Board questioned where that revenue would go in the budget. The Budget Board will also ask if there are any positions that are grant-funded that will not be covered by grants in the future, and therefore become the schools' responsibility in the budget.

Curriculum: Linda Noble

Linda noted that curriculum is level-funded this year.

The curriculum is usually updated in a cycle, such as math one year, English and Language Arts another, Science next, etc. and the Budget Board wanted to know which subject area would get the revision this year.

This should include some new textbooks.

Non-Certified Support Staff: Claudette Lussier

Claudette noted that since this is Personnel, she is working closely with Carl Brunetti on it, and so far the numbers are working well.

The Budget Board discussed ways to look at the Budget, and noted that last year, they were able to come up with a budget lower than the Maintenance of Effort, which they then had to raise to meet it.

It was noted that the School Administrators get paid differently compared to Town employees in similar positions, and it may help the situation if they agree to take a pay freeze.

Meeting Requested by School Department Legal Counsel

The Meeting Request sent by the Schools' Solicitor can be disregarded as it was sent to the Budget Board in error.

The Budget Board requests a letter withdrawing the request formally.

June 30, 2009 Audit Report/Management Letter

The Audit Report was accepted by the Town Council at their meeting on Monday night.

The Budget Board will request copies of the final report.

The Town Ended the year with a surplus of \$500,000, and the Schools with an accumulated surplus of \$1.9 million.

There were also findings including:

-The Water Department has no accountant and used funds without the proper authorization.

-The School Department should pass everything through the Town's

Finance Director.

New Business

School Department Budget Presentation

On March 3rd, the School Department will meet with the Budget Board to present and discuss the school budget.

Town Administrator's 2010-2011 Budget Recommendation

Carl Brunetti suggested that perhaps the Town should look at consolidating some departments with the schools, such as Finance and Information Technology.

Also, there should be a second plan since the Town does not know what the State is going to do with the Motor Vehicle Taxes, and will not know probably until June, after the budget passes at the Financial Town Meeting.

It was noted that only the Budget Board can change a revenue line, it cannot be done from the floor of the Financial Town Meeting.

Charter Review Commission

The Budget Board discussed the wording of a limitation set on the adjustments allowed on the floor of the Financial Town Meeting. This would pertain only to additions to the budget.

The voters would still have an opportunity to submit to the Town Clerk's Office for a vote on adjustments above a limitation, at least 15 days before the meeting with 100 signatures.

Bob Ericson made a motion, seconded by Carl Brunetti, that the proposed adjustment limitation be \$80,000 or 10% of the budget, whichever is smaller.

The motion passed by a vote of 4-3, with Linda Noble abstaining because she is a member of the Charter Review Committee.

The Budget Board discussed individual members sending out press releases, and agreed that it is best to leave press releases to be from the Board as a whole to maintain the respect and reputation as a non-partisan Board.

They will do their best to keep the public informed of any issues by releasing information frequently during the season.

Correspondence

There was correspondence from the Town Administrator regarding members of the Budget Board submitting press releases.

Public Comment

Audra Clark noted that to her knowledge, the Town does have to pay for students' transportation to Charter Schools.

Adjourn

Sheila Chisholm made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Hagop Jawharjian.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.